

REMARKSAmendments

Claim 9 has been found to be allowable. Independent claims 1 and 7 have been canceled, as have the claims that are dependent on them. The cancellation of these claims has been done in the interest of rapid prosecution and without prejudice to Applicants' right to prosecute claims of the same or different scope in one or more continuation applications.

Clarification of Rejected Claims

When examined, claims 1 to 20 were pending in this application. Paragraph 4 of the office action indicates that claims 1 and 7 are rejected under 35 USC § 102(b). Paragraph 7 of the office action indicates that claims 3-6, 11-12, 14-15, and 17-20 are rejected under 35 USC § 103(a). Paragraph 8 of the office action (and box 5 of the Office Action Summary) indicates that claims 9 and 16-20 are allowable. There is no specific rejection of claims 2, 8, 10, or 13, and claims 17-20 are indicated as both rejected and allowed. Applicants have assumed that the rejection of claims 17 and 18 is in error (as they are dependent on a claim specifically identified as allowable) and that the allowance of claims 19 and 20 is in error (as they are not dependent on a claim specifically identified as allowable). In the interest of rapid prosecution claims 2, 8, 10, 13, 19 and 20 have been canceled, although their status is unclear in the office action.

The Rejection Under 35 USC § 102(e)

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 1 and 7 under 35 USC § 102(b) as anticipated by Kent (U.S. Patent No. 5,591,945). It is believed that this rejection is rendered moot in view of the canceled claims.

The Rejection Under 35 USC § 103(a)

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 3-6, 11-12, 14-15, and 17-20 (sic) under 35 USC § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kent (U.S. Patent No. 5,591,945) in view of Kadota et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,260,913). Applicants believe that this rejection is rendered moot with respect to claims 3-6, 11-12, 14-15 and 19-20 in view of the cancellation of these claims. As indicated above, Applicants believe that the rejection of claims 17 and 18 is in error, as these claims are dependent on allowable claim 9. In addition, paragraph 8 of the office action refers to the allowance of claims 9 and 16-20.

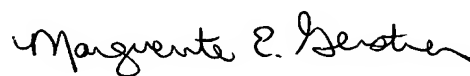
Return of Form PTO-1449

It is respectfully requested that the Examiner return a signed copy of the Form PTO-1449 which was submitted with Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR § 1.56 dated May 22, 2006.

Conclusion

It is believed that this application is now in condition for allowance and such action at an early date is earnestly requested. If, however, there are any outstanding issues which can be usefully discussed by telephone, the Examiner is asked to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



Marguerite E. Gerstner
Registration No. 32,695
Telephone (650) 361-2483